

## **2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Task and Finish Group – report from Cllr Stephen Castle (Chairman)**

1. After two weeks of unprecedented sporting achievement for Team GB and international recognition that Britain delivered a hugely successful Olympic Games, councils across the country laid on celebrations; naming streets after their sporting heroes and bestowing the rare Freedom of the Borough honour. Councils made sure that local communities were able to welcome home their Olympic medal winners and celebrate their achievement, drive and dedication.
2. The Cabinet Committee for the Olympics, which was established to ensure strategic coordination across the Olympic project, put on record their appreciation to all those involved in the success of the Games and the Torch Relay including councils, transport bodies and countless other organisations up and down the country who helped make it happen. The Committee met in the run up to and during the Olympic and Paralympic Games and meetings were chaired by the Prime Minister or the former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Jeremy Hunt MP. The LGA was represented at the Committee at meetings where the agenda required a local government viewpoint by LGA Chairman Sir Merrick Cockell and by Cllr Stephen Castle. At official level meetings which were chaired by a senior civil servant we were represented by a London Borough Chief Executive. This allowed any issues for host councils to be raised with Government and addressed in a timely way. A staff officer from the National Local Authority Resilience Programme was located in the Olympic Secretariat for all key times during Games and liaised closely with the Government Olympic Executive.
3. The Games passed off without incident for all the venues both in and outside London and all the councils involved can be very proud of the huge amount of work that was undertaken to help ensure the Torch Relay and the Olympic and Paralympic Games were such a triumph. Approximately 14.3 million people lined the streets to see the Olympic Flame on its 70-day relay around the country.
4. Councils approached the Paralympic Games in the same way as the Olympic Games and arrangements were the same but on a smaller scale. Thirty-three communities across the UK hosted a Paralympic flame celebration event over the August Bank Holiday weekend. There were fewer competition venues outside London, with rowing at Eton Dorney, sailing at Weymouth and cycling at Brands Hatch in Sevenoaks in Kent. The Olympic Secretariat was staffed throughout the Paralympics and the LGA Liaison officers performed exactly the same role. There was widespread agreement that the LGA Liaison officer post worked well in practice and the learning from this arrangement will be captured to ensure similar that similar ways of working will be used in future when appropriate.
5. Cllr Stephen Castle is due to attend the final meeting of the Nations and Regions Group on 18 September 2012 which will provide an opportunity for sharing Torch relay and Games-time experiences.

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6. A letter has been sent from the LGA to Lord Sebastian Coe on his appointment by the Prime Minister as legacy ambassador. Lord Coe will advise on how best to secure the long-term benefits of hosting the Games, particularly focusing on the economic and business benefits from putting on such a successful Olympic and Paralympic Games.
7. The LGA Task and Finish Group will have its final meeting on 8 November 2012 to consider recommendations on learning and legacy.

<b>Contact officer:</b>	Liz Hobson
<b>Position:</b>	Senior Adviser, Programme Team
<b>Phone no:</b>	0207 664 3229
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:liz.hobson@local.gov.uk">liz.hobson@local.gov.uk</a>